

# St. Georges Bridge fails to make a list of endangered properties

By IEVA AUGSTUMS

Staff reporter

The St. Georges Bridge has been left off a national list of endangered historic properties, a status residents wanting to save the span hoped might stop its demolition.

## ST. GEORGES

Preservation Delaware in January submitted an application for the special designation to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Supporters of the bridge said the span over the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal had significance from an engineering standpoint because its 1942 structure has been preserved.

But the National Trust did not include the bridge on its list of the 11 most endangered historic properties, released Monday.

"It's a decision that's difficult to make," said National Trust spokeswoman Carolin Saqawa. "We must find a balance between the size and seriousness of the threat these places face."

Saqawa said inclusion on the list would not have given the bridge special protection from demolition. However, the National

Trust has not lost a building or property since the list was started in 1988, she said.

"It's the chance you take," Dee Durham, Preservation Delaware executive director, said. "We were hoping that if it got on the list it would heighten awareness."

"I know that everyone in St. Georges doesn't want to save the bridge," Durham said. "However some contingency still exists."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working on an environmental impact study, which federal officials have said will likely lead to destruction of the bridge.

The study began in January and could take three more months, corps spokesman Ed Voigt said.

The study evaluates the social, economic, cultural and environ-

mental effects of closing and demolishing the bridge, he said.

A group of St. Georges' residents has been fighting since 1995 to save the bridge, which connects the two sides of town.

It was nearly saved last year under a plan to give the bridge to Hardcore Composites Inc., which volunteered to pay for its restoration. That deal fell apart in December, when the corps and the state could not reach an agreement about the bridge's financing and ownership.

The community will have 45 days to respond to the corps study once it is released, Voigt said.

"We'll hear what people want to say and we will respond," Voigt said. "It doesn't mean we will change the statement."